The Honorable Shana Dale
Deputy Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
As delivered before the California Space Authority,
New Mexico Space Authority and Space Florida

March 4, 2008

Thank you for that kind introduction. We appreciate all your efforts to come to our Nation's capital in support of NASA and our programs as we head into the final budget cycle for this Administration. I would especially like to thank Melissa Decker, from the office of Governor Schwarzenegger; The Honorable Andrea Seastrand, Executive Director of the California Space Authority; Steve Kohler, President of Space Florida; and Mark Landene, Executive Director of the New Mexico Space Authority.

We at NASA appreciate the involvement of the California Space and Education Workforce Institute and its parent organization, the California Space Authority, as an Allied Organization for NASA's Centennial Challenge program. The Institute this year will conduct a second Regolith Excavation Challenge in California on August 2 and 3 at the California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. The challenge has attracted a total of 20 teams –including companies, colleges, and individuals – who will compete for $750,000 in prize money. Most importantly, the challenge is expected to produce technology that NASA can use to mine regolith on the surface of the Moon.

The fact that so many of you have traveled so far to express to Congress your support for the President's Budget request for NASA is a tribute to the strength of the space economy. Your timing is excellent because we are at a critical point when public officials and the Nation are increasingly concerned with which industry or industries could lead a new wave of economic growth.

This is a nation that has always reached out to explore – from its early days of the Mayflower to today as we develop the technologies and build the hardware to return to the Moon, then Mars and beyond. Indeed, a nation that fails to explore will fail to thrive.

At NASA, we have had 50 years of successful exploration in large part due to our partnership with the many capable innovators in this exciting industry. Yet, we have just scratched the surface. There is so much more to explore. To keep our Nation great, we must focus on the next frontier. The industry helping us explore the universe is also helping us fuel the space economy. And, according to the Space Foundation, this space economy is now generating more than $220 billion in revenue worldwide. We define this Space Economy as the full range of activities that create and provide value to human beings in the course of exploring, understanding and utilizing space.

While the Space Economy booms, NASA works within the reality of a tight Federal budget. Those realities will cause a gap of almost five years where there will be no U.S.

government capability to fly humans into space. The House and Senate Budget Committees are expected to start the process on the Administration's budget request shortly by marking up their respective Resolutions. NASA's authorization also expires this year, so we expect a possible authorization bill this year, in addition to the appropriations bill.

In order for us to stay on track with our plan to reach beyond low Earth orbit, our funding must stay on track. We cannot have another set-back as we did in FY 2007. It is important that we keep the gap minimized between the retirement of the shuttle and the Constellation program coming on line. We appreciate congressional efforts that funded NASA at the President's request level of $17.3 billion in FY 2008.

Like NASA, Congress and the White House have to make tough decisions annually to prioritize many competing programs. We appreciate the education efforts of industry, nonprofits, academia, and energized citizens and realize your efforts were crucial to achieving a funding level at the President's request. And we value your continued support as we move forward with the Constellation program.

We are looking forward to an incredibly busy 2008 for NASA. We kicked off 2008 with the launch of STS-122 and successful installation of the European Columbus module, further expanding the global influence on the International Space Station. January also marked the start of testing on the power pack, or fuel pumps, of the J-2X upper stage engine that will help power the launch vehicle into orbit.

NASA is making real progress with crew vehicle and launch vehicle components, such as landing systems and thermal protection materials. These components are undergoing tests in vacuum chambers and wind tunnels and on proving grounds across the country.

The launch of STS-123 next week will truly be a global venture with all of our International partners on deck to kick off the first of three missions to install the Japanese Experiment Logistics Module, or Kibo. We also look forward to later this year when NASA will send the shuttle Atlantis and her crew to service the Hubble Space Telescope. The crew will refresh this national treasure, thereby ensuring continued access to Hubble's excellent science and those spectacular images that keep our place in this Universe in proper perspective.

With 2008 off to a great start, let us now turn to where we are with our plans going forward with the FY 2009 budget presented to the Congress last month. The President's request for NASA is $17.6 billion, a 1.8% increase over FY 2008. This keeps the Agency's budget at 6/10ths of one percent of the federal budget. We are pleased with our budget request. This increase demonstrates the President's strong commitment to funding the balanced priorities he set forth for the Agency in space exploration, Earth and space science, and aeronautics research.

For Exploration, NASA's best estimate remains March 2015 for bringing the crew vehicle and launch vehicle on line with the funds currently projected to be available. The Constellation team – both government and our industry partners – strive to beat those predictions for initial operating capability. The Constellation team across this great country is working to effect a smooth transition of facilities, equipment, and people from the Space Shuttle program as it carries out its final missions.

Pad abort demonstrations will begin this fall out at White Sands Missile Range, and Ares I-X flight tests from KSC Launch Pad B are planned for spring 2009, with a dummy upper stage. Progress is being made to get to Preliminary Design Review for the crew vehicle and launch vehicle later this year.

As you can see, the Constellation team has its work cut out for it in the months and years ahead. We are all anticipating the launch of the Ares V rocket which will cause a thunderous rumble –the likes of which the world has not experienced since the days of Apollo. The test launch of the Ares V will be followed soon thereafter by the launch of a crew of astronauts returning America to the Moon. It will take hard work this year and many more to follow to make that giant leap.

That is where we are with Constellation. The FY 2009 budget request also provides significant focus on Earth Science, with $910 million over 5 years for development of high-priority Earth Science missions from National Academies Decadal Survey and an additional $344 million over 5 years for Lunar Science missions. In total, we have planned for 15 science launches by the end of FY 2009, adding to the 55 Science missions currently in operation. In fact, last month we announced two new Earth Science Missions as recommended in the Decadal Survey – the Soil Moisture Active-Passive (SMAP) and the Ice, Cloud, and land Elevation Satellite-II (ICESat II). We continue to focus on affordable, executable, world-class missions that are consistent with the priorities of the National Academy of Sciences.

NASA's Aeronautics program will continue to focus on innovative fundamental research for the Next Generation Air Transportation System and on the environmental, safety, and capacity challenges we will face on the horizon. We have aligned the program with the National Aeronautics R&D Policy. We are continuing the development of the nation's world class aeronautics expertise by funding subsonic fixed wing, rotary wing and supersonic aircraft, and exciting research to enable air breathing access to space and entry into planetary atmospheres.

NASA will continue its mission to move forward beyond low-Earth orbit and to conduct long-term extensive exploration and scientific activities on the moon as soon as 2020.

America's leadership in space and all that this entails for our economy, technology, and scientific advancement, makes it a key component of our leadership in the world. Working together we can build a sustainable civil space program that will continue to contribute to our generation and future generations. There is more than a vision at

NASA. There is a program – a plan – and a clear direction for the future. Thank you for all your efforts and good luck on your visits here in the Nation’s capital.

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